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ABSTRACT

Since behavioral change in the student teacher gravitates towards the supervising teacher (presently plagued by lack of role definition) and away from the college supervisor (who presently suffers from a lack of direction and specific objectives), a new role definition is needed for them both. Three professional people would be involved in this proposal of ideal supervision: the building coordinator, the college coordinator, and the public or private school supervising teacher. The new role of building coordinator includes the following functions: a) preparing supervising teachers to be more functional in the supervisory realm by conducting on-site workshops and/or seminars in order to present necessary skills and competencies to improve the effectiveness of the student teacher; b) working with all student teachers in a classroom setting; c) coordinating, preparing, and evaluating on-site course work for student teachers; and d) acting as liaison between supervising teacher, administrator, student teacher, community, and the college. Relieved of responsibility for observation and evaluation of the student teacher, the college coordinator will serve as a resource person to the student teachers, building coordinators, supervising teachers, and the university. The function of the supervising teacher will undergo little change. (JA)

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A NEW PROPOSAL FOR THE SUPERVISION OF STUDENT TEACHING

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College supervisors could better spend their time in inservice work with supervising teachers in the public schools rather than occasional supervision of the student teachers. The fact that student teaching is almost universally recognized as the most viable and valuable professional experience in teacher preparation, is accepted by many educators.

> New teachers typically consider it (student teaching) the single most valuable component of their preparation; experienced teachers recognize its importance to the development of the profession; school officials place considerable emphasis upon the level of success achieved in it when filling out their staffs.[1]

However, critics have pointed out that many student teaching experiences leave much to be desired. Silberman contends that student teaching may contain more liabilities than assets for the student and as a result reinforce poor teaching habits rather than sound procedures. Silberman charges:

> (student teachers)...receive incredibly little feedback on their performance, for supervision tends to be sporatic and perfunctory. More important, the target is usually hidden from the students' view; they, their supervisors, and the teachers in whose classrooms they practice usually have no conception of education from which to criticize and evaluate their teaching.[2]

The impact of the public school supervising teacher upon the student teacher and his resulting success or failure is also widely recognized. Hicks has suggested that the supervising teacher exercises the most influence over the student teacher in shaping his attitudes, skills, and ideas; at the same time however, the supervising teacher is the one professional least likely

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to be aware of specific objectives of teacher education institutions.[3] The competence and direction provided by the supervising teacher becomes more crucial than that of the college supervisor who in his present role is provided with the power of final student evaluation.[4] Evidence suggests that the supervising teacher, then, becomes the most important factor in the student teaching experience - more crucial to the student teacher's success than the program or the college supervisor.

Because behavioral change in the student teacher gravitates toward the supervising teacher and from the college supervisor, a new role definition is needed for both the supervising teacher and the college supervisor. At present there are obvious deficiencies in the role both of these professionals play. Low status of the college of education faculty member among his university peers coupled with a lack of role definition with regard to his supervision are common place.[5] The cooperating teachers' lot is even worse when one considers the lack of direction and specific objectives. The tendency for the supervising teacher is to supervise as he was supervised in student teaching. The contact between these two parties before and during the student teaching experience is usually minimal and often offers "one isolated" conference upon which the student teacher's evaluation is based.

Educators in universities and the public schools need to recognize the simple fact that the supervising teacher is in the best position to effect desirable student teacher behavioral changes. The supervising teacher is also in the best position to evaluate the teaching performance of the student teacher.

Three professional people would be involved in this proposal of ideal supervision: the building coordinator, the college coordinator, and the public or private school supervising teacher. Many present programs of student teaching could function utilizing these supervisory personnel.

BUILDING COORDINATOR

The building coordinator, is a newly created position in this proposal. His role is defined by the following specific functions:

(1) Preparing supervising teachers to be more functional in the supervisory realm by conducting on-site workshops and/or seminars in order to present necessary skills and competencies to improve the effectiveness of the student teacher.

(2) Working with all student teachers in the classroom setting.

(3) Coordinating and preparing on-site coursework for student teachers.

(4) Acting as liason between college, supervising teacher, administration, student teacher and community.

(5) Remaining an active teacher for one-half of the day in order to provide a model of exemplary teaching for student teachers to observe.

(6) Cooperating in the assessment of the characteristics of the supervising teacher and student teacher to determine effective placement.

(7) Cooperating in determining continuous evaluation of student teacher growth.

(8) Maintaining contact with the classroom setting as a teacher in order to maintain a pragmatic view of the educational process.

In order to attain the primary functions delineated for the building coordinator, this master teacher should be recognized for his superior teaching by pupils, administration, university personnel, and the community. He must also have demonstrated ability or the potential to implement good supervisory techniques. The building coordinator must also have demonstrated an exceptional ability to stimulate the professional growth of student teachers. The ability

to function as a generalist for all subject matter or for all grade levels in elementary schools is a prime requisite.

In this new role the building coordinator will perform many activities which are at present performed by the college supervisor. The primary reasons for this suggested role change are: (a) To provide for those professionals who are actively involved in the realities of public school teaching; (b) To attain better continuity of supervision; (c) To provide for potentially better interaction with colleagues in the school; and (d) To offer a greater opportunity to make the entire field experience more relevant for the student teacher.

COLLEGE COORDINATOR

In this proposal the college coordinator will be relieved of the responsibility for observation and evaluation of the student teacher. The building coordinator will fulfill many facets of the role traditionally assumed by the college coordinator. The college coordinator will serve as a resource person to the student teachers, building coordinators, supervising teachers and the university. In addition he will exercise responsibility of coordinating the student teaching experience within two or more schools. New functions will be assumed by the college coordinator which include the following:

(1) Assuming the ultimate responsibility for decision making processes in relation to all components of the student teaching program.

(2) Determining selection of the building coordinators in cooperation with the building principal and university.

(3) Providing in-service training for building coordinators.

(4) Cooperating in the placement of student teachers within school settings.

(5) Cooperating with the building coordinator in the planning and implementation of on-site courses for student teachers.

(6) Performing as a liason between school and university.

SUPERVISING TEACHER

The role of the supervising teacher within the proposal involves the least change from his traditional role. The major responsibilities will be to facilitate the growth of the student teacher within the designated time sequence and provide for professional entry of the student teacher into the teaching profession. These responsibilities will be fulfilled through the following specific functions:

(1) Facilitating the gradual induction of student teachers into the teaching process.

(2) Implementing the knowledge of school and community objectives for student teachers.

(3) Providing a variety of exemplary models of teaching in a classroom.

(4) Identifying and facilitating observation opportunities of other recognized areas which include outstanding teachers and the supportive personnel of the teaching process.

(5) Conferring with the student teacher on a continuous basis in relation to his strengths and weaknesses.

(6) Assuming major responsibilities for evaluation of student teacher competencies.

(7) Acting as a liason between the building coordinator, the college coordinator, and the student teacher.

The supervising teacher should be an experienced teacher who is a recognized expert in a subject matter area and/or grade level. This professional should also be desirous of having a student teacher and have a genuine commitment to

the preparation of teachers. Finally, the supervising teacher should demonstrate the ability to communicate with the student teacher and objectively evaluate his professional growth.

CONCLUSIONS

Certain necessary components are crucial to the success of this proposal. One factor which would have an impact for implementation involves the necessity for some clustering of student teachers in limited numbers (15-20) within each given school. The selection of key personnel must be based upon merit as opposed to other "political factors". Finally, the necessity of a "team effort" by the building coordinator, college coordinator, supervising teacher, and student teacher is of utmost importance.

Public and private schools participating in teacher preparation have requested a greater input into the process. The proposal of supervision outlined not only includes the potentiality for better supervision but also provides for much greater involvement and cooperative effort between universities and schools. Ideal supervision at all levels has received lip service from educators in the past. However, if better preparation of potential teachers is to become a reality, programs which emphasize cooperative endeavors must be implemented.

NOTES

1. James A. Johnson & Roger C. Anderson, Secondary Student Teaching: Readings, Glenview, Ill. Scott Foresman and Co. p. 1.

2. Charles E. Silberman, "You May Not Agree, But...Even Student Teaching is Dismal" Today's Education. Jan., 1971. p. 22.

3. E. Perry Hicks, "Changing the Role of the Cooperating Teacher," Journal of Teacher Education, Vol. XX, No. 2, Summer 1969. pp. 153-157.

4. Charles E. Silberman, "You May Not Agree, But...Even Student Teaching is Dismal" Today's Education. Jan., 1971. p. 63.

5. David E. Shawver, "Needed: Improved Status for Supervisors of Student Teaching," The Education Forum, Vol. XXXIV, No. 4, May 1970. pp. 513-518.